Import of Hazardous Items

12. SHRIMATI JAYAPRADA NAHATA: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state;

(a) whether it is a fact that seconds and defective steel items and tin plates which are banned for sale in the Western Countries are being imported into the country endangering the health of the children;

(b) if so, the countries from where these items are being imported and by whom, along with the reasons therefor; and

(c) the steps taken to check the import of hazardous items?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) As per Export Import Policy, import of certain types of Hazardous Waste into the country is restricted. Prime as well as seconds and defective steel items and tin plates are classified under the same Exim Code in the Chapter 72 of ITC (HS) Classifications of Export and Import Items 1997—2002, and their import is permitted. As per information available for some European countries, these items are not banned for sale as such but are not allowed to be used for food packaging. Use of tin plates for packaging food products in India is regulated through various other laws i.e. Edible Oil Packaging Regulation Order 1998, Essential Commodity Act and Prevention of Food Adulteration Act.

(b) As per ITC (HS) Classifications of Export and Import Items 1997—2002, both prime as well as seconds and defectives of various steel items are classified under the same Exim Code. Since the import data is collected according to the specific Exim Code assigned to a particular item, it is not possible to provide separate import figures for any type of seconds and defective steel items and tin plates.

(c) Import of certain types of hazardous waste is already restricted in the Export-Import Policy 1997—2002.

Export of Agricultural Produce

13. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the targets set for export of agricultural produce during 1997-98 and 1998-99;

(b) how far these have been achieved;

(c) the strategy adopted by the Government to increase export of agricultural produce; and

(d) how far this strategy has been successful in increasing agro-exports?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) Performance of the previous year serves as a benchmark target for export agricultural products. Since international trade in agricultural commodities is dependent on domestic supply matched with international demand world prices, prevailing consumer preferences and quality concerned, targets set are essentially an indication of intent.

(c) Policy of exports of agricultural products forms an integral part of the Export Import Policy of the country. The policy regarding exports of agricultural products is governed principally by the concerns of India's food security, maximizing farm incomes and earning foreign exchange. Review of export performance of agricultural products is an on-going process, and accordingly, policy interventions are made, as and when considered necessary, with a view to making agricultural exports increasingly viable.

(d) Agro exports including tea, coffee and marine products during the year 1997-98 were at Rs. 24626.16 crores and during the year 1998-99, were at Rs. 25224.63 crores.

Export growth

14. MISS SAROJ KHAPARDE: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) the targets set for the growth of exports during 1997-98 and 1998-99;

(b) how far these have been achieved;

(c) what had been the growth in exports during the first half of 1999-2000; and

(d) the details of measures taken to accelerate the growth of exports?

THE MINISTER OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI MURASOLI MARAN): (a) and (b) The export growth rate targets and export performance during 1997-98 and 1998-99 are as under: